



Reading and Studying the Holy Bible

Submitted by
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"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy name."

When we talk about the Bible we somehow use a lot of religious jargon without considering what we are saying. We talk about **the** Bible in the same context as other so called religious books, historic literature or inscriptions on archeological relics; without thinking that this "Book" has impacted so many thousands of lives over so many years and will continue to do the same in the future.

The Bible is called "The Book, Scripture, Our Living Manual, God's Library, The Message, and The Good News" but the Bible **is** God's Word **to us** (the human race. It is for nations, all cultures, and all colors of people and all languages). The Word of God is presented in at least one thousand, three hundred and seventy-eight (1378) different languages.

The concept of the Bible being God's Word to us should blow our minds. What could be more important to us, when we consider that the creator who possesses all knowledge, all wisdom, who is all powerful and transcendent God decided to write to us?

For a Christian, nothing should be more natural to us than reading the Bible. We spend many hours reading the sports news, daily newspapers, our favorite magazines, our news feed on face book and twitter so there is very little time to spend with the Word of God.

"Like newborn babies you should crave – thirst for, earnestly desire – the pure (unadulterated) spiritual milk, that by it you may be nurtured and grow (matured) unto {completed} salvation; since you have already tasted of the goodness and kindness of the Lord." **1 Peter 2:2-3**

If we really believe that the Bible is the Word of God then it should shape every aspect of our existence. It should guide the decisions we make in our lives. We should depend on the Word of God for our spiritual growth and survival as a child depends on milk to survive and grow.

Now that we know that the Bible is important to us, we need to learn how to approach it in the right way and with the right motives. "So there is a right and wrong the way to study the Bible?" No, there are **right ways and wrong motives** to study the Word of God.

Three reasons that I personally found out that were driving me to read the Bible but were the wrong motives are:

1) **Guilt** - Guilt is a powerful motivator and many times this guilt is connected with legalism. We create our own standard ("I must read x chapters per day"), and we then hold ourselves to it not considering that God had not placed this standard on us but we ourselves. Then we begin to judge others by that standard.

2) **Status** - There is a certain status or air of respect reserved for those who know their Bibles well. We all should aspire to know God's Word inside out. Can you take a minute and ask yourself why you want to know God's Word that well? Do you think that He is pleased with your desire to appear intelligent? What about the desire to be recognized, to be the best, or the most spiritual person in the room? Too often Christians are motivated by status when we should be motivated by a desire to know God, to be changed by His Word, and to love and serve the people around us. Maybe you have noticed the way others who may seem to know the Bible get treated and you want to be treated the same. Remember this: competition is a great motivator, but it is the wrong reason to study the Bible. God cares more about your character than your productivity, and studying the Bible in order to be appreciated by others or to be better than someone else is just ridiculous!

3) **Teaching Material** - Sometimes our motivations get skewed when we have to study the Bible in order to lead a Bible foundation class (Bible study group), Sunday school class, preach a sermon, or just have some sort of spiritual gem to share with your friends on Twitter or Facebook. It is not wrong, but necessary, to use the Bible in preparation for teaching others. The problem arises when we approach the Bible only as a source for teaching material. It is possible that we scan the pages of the Bible just to find nuggets to share